

September 23, 2004

### U.S. House of Representatives Passes Congressman Akin's "Pledge Protection Act"

Washington, D.C. - Today the U.S. House of Representatives Passed Congressman Akin's Pledge Protection Act by a vote of 247 to 173. Congressman Todd Akin (R-MO) praised its passage of his bill to protect the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance. "This is an essential step in stopping the overreach of activist judges and will free the vast majority of children and adults who wish to use the words 'under God' in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance from the threat of censorship," said Akin.

"I am grateful for the support of the bill's 225 cosponsors including the hard work and leadership of Representative James Sensenbrenner (R-WI), Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, and House Speaker Dennis Hastert (R-IL)," Akin noted.

Exercising Article III of the Constitution, the Act (H.R. 2028) protects the Pledge of Allegiance by removing from the jurisdiction of the federal courts the question of the Pledge's constitutionality.

In June, the U.S. Supreme Court reversed a decision by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals that had ruled the Pledge unconstitutional by ruling that the non-custodial parent who brought the suit lacked standing. This ruling failed to address the underlying issue of whether "under God" is constitutional, thereby inviting further court challenges.

"We are moving closer to the goal of protecting the free speech of those who wish to affirm that their rights come from God as they recite the Pledge of Allegiance," said Akin. "When the right to free speech is being threatened it is incumbent upon Congress to act.

"Our Declaration of Independence affirms that God is the source of our rights. When we jettison that conviction from the Pledge, we erode the very foundation of the rights that define our identity as Americans.

"I look forward to working with Senator Jim Talent on his companion Senate bill and encourage the entire Senate to join in affirming this vital part of our national heritage," concluded Akin.